

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
IO-13 SSC-01 AID-05 HA-05 EB-08 TRSE-00 OMB-01  
/097 W

-----012866 091416Z /45

R 091200Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9327  
INFO AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI  
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO  
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 3476

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, ET  
SUBJ: NEW APPOINTMENTS ANNOUNCED TRANSFERRING SOME DIRG  
MEMBERS TO PROVINCES

SUMMARY: IN THE FIRST OF PROBABLE SERIES OF PERSONNEL  
CHANGES PRIOR TO CELEBRATION OF 4TH REVOLUTION DAY (SEPT  
12) PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (PMAC OR  
DIRG) CHAIRMAN MENGISTU HAS MOVED TO STRENGTHEN FURTHER  
HIS POSITION WITHIN THE DIRG AND TIGHTEN HIS CONTROL OVER  
PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS. OF THE ELEVEN ANNOUNCED APPOINTMENTS,  
SIX ARE DIRG MEMBERS ASSIGNED AS REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS,  
CLEARLY REMOVING THEM FROM THE CENTER OF POWER. ONLY TWO OF  
THE APPOINTEES ARE CIVILIANS, BOTH CIVIL SERVANTS WHO WILL  
CONTINUE IN SIMILAR CAPACITIES. THESE CHANGES REPRESENT THE  
FIRST TIME ANY DIRG MEMBERS HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO NORMALLY  
CIVILIAN BUREAUCRATIC POSITIONS IN OTHER THAN AN ADVISORY  
FUNCTION. ALSO BY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE DIRG MEM-  
BERS IN ADDIS ABABA, MENGISTU APPARENTLY DESIRES TO IMPROVE  
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DIRG'S BUREAUCRACY, TO INCREASE HIS  
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DIRECT CONTROL OVER THE CIVILIAN BUREAUCRACY AND TO ENHANCE  
HIS OWN AUTHORITY EVEN FURTHER. END SUMMARY.

1. FIRST OF RUMORED HIGH-LEVEL APPOINTMENTS WERE OFFICIALLY  
ANNOUNCED AUG 5TH. APPOINTMENTS INCLUDED NEW MINISTER OF  
INFORMATION AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE, MAJOR GIRMA YILMA, WHO  
WAS APPARENTLY PROMOTED FROM CAPTAIN AT SAME TIME. MAJOR

GIRMA HAS AUTHORED NUMEROUS ARTICLES IN THE AMHARIC NEWS-PAPER, ADDIS ZEMEN, DURING PAST 6-8 MONTHS INCLUDING TRANSLATIONS OF SOVIET "HISTORICAL" ACCOUNTS OF WORLD WAR II. LITTLE ELSE IS YET KNOWN ABOUT MAJOR GIRMA, BUT IT APPEARS HE IS FLUENT IN RUSSIAN AND HE COULD HASTEN THE DISMISSAL OF MININFO PERMSEC BAALU GIRMA, WHO HAS BEEN ACTING MINISTER AND WHO IS SUSPECTED OF PRO-WESTERN SYMPATHIES. AS A SIDE-LIGHT, ETHIOPIAN HERALD EDITOR HAILE-MARIAM GOSHU IS SCHEDULED TO VISIT USSR IN NEAR FUTURE. IMPLICATIONS ARE FOR EVEN MORE HEAVILY BIASED MEDIA COVERAGE IN FAVOR OF EASTERN BLOC.

2. EIGHT NEW REGIONAL (PROVINCIAL) ADMINISTRATORS WERE NAMED, INCLUDING SIX DIRG MEMBERS. THESE ARE:

A. ARSSI REGION - HAILE-GIORGIS TASSEW, FORMERLY ADMINISTRATOR OF WOLLO REGION AND PRIOR TO THAT DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR OF SHOA REGION. HE FILLS VACANT POSITION.

B. BALE REGION - LTCOL GABREYES WOLDE-HANNA, A DIRG MEMBER SIMULTANEOUSLY PROMOTED FROM MAJOR, WHO GRADUATED FROM HARAR MILACADEMY, HAS HAD FAVORABLE CONTACT WITH US MILITARY ADVISORS IN PAST, IS DESCRIBED AS INTELLIGENT, AND WAS ORIGINALLY SECRETARY OF THE DIRG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE. HE REPLACES AN ABRASIVE COLONEL WHO WAS PROBABLY A MEMBER OF ME'I SONE.

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C. GAMO GOFFA REGION - CMDR TILAHUN EJETA, NAVAL COMMANDER, SIMULTANEOUSLY PROMOTED FROM LTCMDR, 40 YEARS OLD AND TRAINED IN US IN 1961. HE REPLACES A CIVILIAN WHO HAS HAD A DIFFICULT TIME DURING HIS TWO YEARS IN GAMO GOFFA.

D. GOJJAM REGION - MAJOR KASSAYE ARAGAW, A DIRG MEMBER SIMULTANEOUSLY PROMOTED FROM CAPTAIN, WHO MOST RECENTLY WAS ASSIGNED AS DIRG REPRESENTATIVE TO SHOA REGION. HE REPLACES A CIVILIAN WHO ALSO HAD A DIFFICULT TWO YEARS IN GOJJAM.

E. GONDAR REGION (FORMERLY BEGEMDIR AND SIMEIN) - MAJOR MELAKU TEFERA, A DIRG MEMBER WHO HAS RISEN FROM LIEUTENANT TO CAPTAIN AND NOW MAJOR IN LESS THAN A YEAR. HE HAS BEEN DIRG REP IN GONDAR FOR AT LEAST 9 MONTHS AND HE FILLS A VACANT POSITION.

F. SHOA REGION - LTCOL DEBELA DINSA, A DIRG MEMBER PROMOTED FROM MAJOR IN MAY/JUNE 1978 AND FORMERLY CHAIRMAN OF ADDIS ABABA OVERALL REVOLUTIONARY OPERATIONS COMMAND, WITH DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR NEIGHBORHOOD DEFENSE SQUADS. HE IS REPORTEDLY AN OUTSPOKEN MEMBER OF ICHAT (ETHIOPIAN OPPRESSED REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE), ONE OF FIVE MARXIST-LENINIST GROUPS,

ICHAT IS PRESENTLY OUT OF FAVOR WITH MENGISTU. IT HAS BEEN RUMORED THAT PRESSURE HAS BEEN BUILDING WITHIN THE DIRG AGAINST LTCOL DEBELA AND HE HAD BEEN SLATED FOR THE CHOPPING BLOCK FOR THE PAST 3-4 MONTHS. HIS APPOINTMENT AS SHOA ADMINISTRATOR, ALTHOUGH A DEMOTION, PROBABLY REPRESENTS AN EFFORT BY MENGISTU TO INTERCEDE ON DEBELA'S BEHALF FOR HIS PAST LOYALTY. HE FILLS A VACANT POSITION.

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G. WOLLEGA REGION - 2ND LT NEGUSSIE FANTA, A DIRG MEMBER WHO HAS BEEN DIRG REP IN WOLLEGA FOR AT LEAST 9 MONTHS. HE REPLACES ABIYU GELETA WHO WAS APPOINTED AS COMMISSIONER OF REPARATIONS COMMISSION (SEE BELOW).

H. WOLLO REGION - LTCOL NADEW ZAKARIAS, A DIRG MEMBER PROMOTED FROM MAJOR WHO HAS WORKED ON DIRG PUBLIC RELATIONS PREVIOUSLY AND WAS RUMORED TO BE IMPROVING HIS STANDING WITH THE DIRG. HE HAS ORGANIZED REVOLUTION DAY CELEBRATIONS IN PAST, HAS PARTICIPATED IN SOME DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, HAS RECEIVED SOME TRAINING IN THE US (1965) AND SPEAKS FRENCH. HIS APPOINTMENT COULD BE FOR PURPOSE OF BETTER COORDINATING MAJOR RELIEF EFFORTS IN WOLLO. HE REPLACES HAILE-GIORGIS TASSEW (SEE ABOVE).

3. OTHER TWO APPOINTMENTS ARE FOR NEWLY CREATED POSITIONS OF COMMISSIONER OF REPARATIONS COMMISSION AND CHIEF OF PROTOCOL IN CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE.

A. REPARATIONS COMMISSIONER, ABIYU GELETA, WILL HEAD COM-  
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MISSION CREATED IN JUNE TO COMPILE DAMAGES FROM SOMALI IN-  
VASION, A RELATIVELY SAFE, APOLITICAL JOB. ABIYU WAS EDUCATED  
IN THE US AND IS A MEMBER OF THE DISCREDITED ME'I SONE.

B. DIRG CHAIRMAN'S NEW PROTOCOL OFFICER, MAJOR FISSEHA GEDA,  
HAS BEEN CLOSE TO THE DIRG AND HAS HAD EXTENSIVE CONTACTS  
WITH RESIDENT DIPLOMATIC COMMUNITY. ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRO-  
TOCOL OFFICE MAY BE AN EFFORT BY MENGISTU TO CREATE MORE  
DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS WITH RESIDENT EMBASSIES AND TO ELIMI-  
NATE EXCESSIVE BUREAUCRATIC DELAYS WITH HIS OWN MINISTRIES.

4. COMMENT: ADDITIONAL APPOINTMENTS ARE EXPECTED SOON WHICH  
WILL FURTHER DIFFUSE DIRG THROUGH ASSIGNING MEMBER AS PRO-  
VINCIAL AND DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS OUTSIDE OF ADDIS ABABA.  
IT IS INTERESTING THAT AT THE SAME TIME AS RUMORS ABOUT THE  
FORMATION (OR POSTPONEMENT THEREOF) OF NATIONAL WORKERS'  
PARTY INTENSIFY, MENGISTU IS DESIGNATING DIRG MEMBERS AND  
OTHER MILITARY PERSONNEL FOR KEY ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS.  
ALL CENTRAL, NORTHERN AND EASTERN REGIONS (PROVINCES),  
POTENTIALLY VOLATILE AREAS, ARE NOW ADMINISTERED BY NON-  
CIVILIANS (ONLY 4 OF ETHIOPIA'S 14 REGIONS ARE GOVERNED BY  
CIVILIANS). MENGISTU HAS ATTEMPTED TO PALLIATE THE DIRG  
REASSIGNMENTS BY ATTACHING PROMOTIONS TO THEM, BY CLAIMING  
THEY ARE INTENDED TO ESTABLISH FAVORABLE CONDITIONS FOR AD-  
VANCEMENT OF A PROLETARIAN PARTY, AND BY URGING UPON AP-  
POINTEES THAT IT IS THEIR "HISTORIC TASK TO UPLIFT THE  
COUNTRY'S FALTERING ECONOMY." (THEME OF DETERIORATING ECONO-  
MIC STIUATION IS RECEIVING GREATER PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
LATELY BY HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT).

5. THUS, EVEN IF A PROLETARIAN PARTY IS ESTABLISHED BY THE  
SEPT 12 REVOLUTION ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, AND THIS IS  
STILL NOT CERTAIN, MENGISTU WILL CONTINUE TO EXPAND HIS DIRECT  
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CONTROL OVER ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT. THIS WILL ALSO CONTINUE  
THE TREND TOWARDS CENTRALIZATION OF THE GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE.  
BY ASSIGNING DIRG MEMBERS TO FULL-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE RATHER  
THAN ADVISORY POSITIONS OUTSIDE ADDIS, HE IS MOVING TOWARDS  
MORE EFFECTIVELY STREAMLINING THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS  
WITHIN THE DIRG AND IS CONCENTRATING EVEN GREATER POWER IN  
HIS OWN HANDS.

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## Message Attributes

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